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MEMOIRS of General William T. Sherman.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF

ASSUMING COMMAND OF THE MILITARY DIVISION
OF THE MISSISSIPPI.

PREPARING FOR THE ATLANTA CAMPAIGN.

The Great Question of Transportation and Supplies.

SHERMAN WANTS HIS MEN BACK FROM BANKS.

CHAPTER XVI.

ATLANTA CAMPAIGN—NASHVILLE AND
CHATTANOOGA TO KENNESAW, MARCH,
APRIL, AND MAY, 1864.



ON THE 18TH day of March, 1864, at Nashville, Tenn., I relieved Lieut.-Gen. Grant, in command of the Military Division of the Mississippi, embracing the Departments of the Ohio, Cumberland, Tennessee, and Arkansas, commanded respectively by Maj.-Gens. Schofield, Thomas, McPherson, and Steele. Gen. Grant

was in the act of starting East to assume command of all the armies of the United States, but more particularly to give direction in person to the Armies of the Potomac and James, operating against Richmond; and I accompanied him as far as Cincinnati on his way, to avail myself of the opportunity to discuss privately many little details incident to the contemplated changes, and of preparation for the great events then impending. Among these was the intended

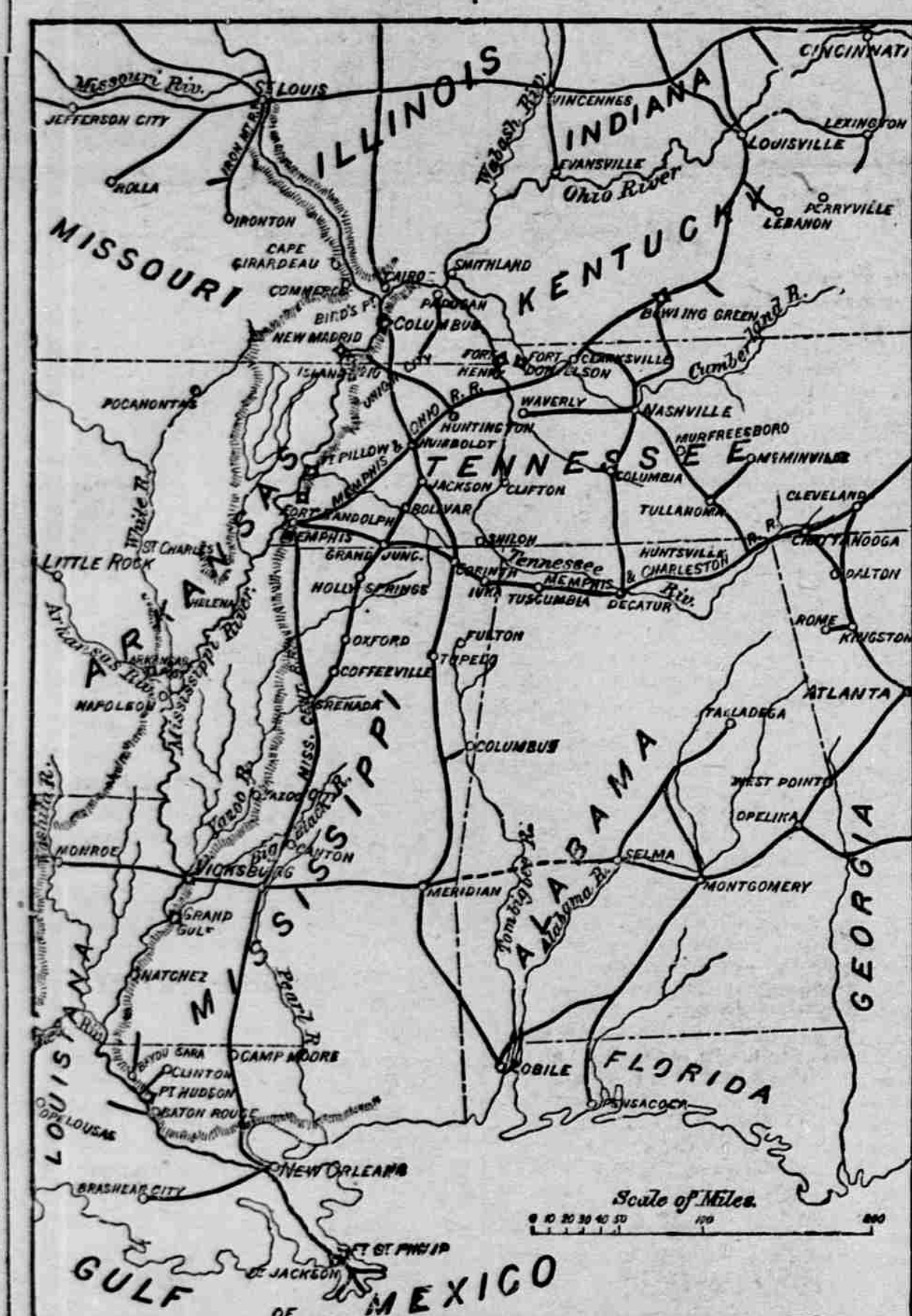


GEN. JOHN M. SCHOFIELD.

After my return to Nashville I addressed myself to the task of organization and preparation, which involved the general security of the vast region of the South which had been already

conquered, more especially the several routes of supply and communication with the active armies at the front, and to organize

A LARGE ARMY TO MOVE INTO GEORGIA, coincident with the advance of the Eastern armies against Richmond. I soon received from Col. J. B. Fry, now of the Adjutant-General's Department, but then at Washington in charge of the Provost-Marshal-General's Office—a letter asking me to do something for Gen. Buell. I answered him frankly, telling him of my understanding with Gen. Grant, and that I was still awaiting the expected order of the War Department, assigning Gen. Buell to my command. Col. Fry, as Gen. Buell's



special friend, replied that he was very anxious that I should make specific application for the services of Gen. Buell by name, and inquired what I proposed to offer him. To this I answered that, after the agreement with Gen. Grant that he would notify me from Washington, I could not with propriety press the matter, but if Gen. Buell should be assigned to me specifically I was prepared to assign him to command all the troops on the Mississippi River from Cairo to Natchez, comprising about three divisions, or the equivalent of a corps d'armee. Gen. Grant never afterward communicated to me on the subject at all; and I inferred that Mr. Stanton, who was notoriously vindictive in his prejudices, did not consent to the employment of these high officers. Gen. Buell, toward the close of the war, published a bitter political letter, aimed at Gen. Grant, reflecting on his general management of the war, and stated that both Gens. Canby and Sherman had offered him a subordinate command, which he had declined, because he had once outranked us. This was not true as to me, or Canby, either, I think, for both Gen. Canby and I ranked him at West Point and in the old Army, and he (Gen. Buell) was only superior to us in the date of his commission as Major-General for a short period in 1862. This newspaper communication, though aimed

at Gen. Grant, reacted on himself, for it closed his military career. Gen. Crittenden afterward obtained authority for service, and I offered him a division, but he declined it for the reason, as I understood it, that he had at one time commanded a corps. He is now in the United States service, commanding the 17th Inf. Gen. McCook obtained a command under Gen. Canby, in the Department of the Gulf, where he rendered good service, and he is also in the Regular service, Lieutenant-Colonel, 10th Inf.

I returned to Nashville from Cincinnati about the 25th of March, and



GEN. SLOCUM.

started at once, in a special car attached to the regular train, to inspect my command at the front, going to Pulaski, Tenn., where I found Gen. G. M. Dodge; thence to Huntsville, Ala., where I had left a part of my personal staff and the records of the department during the time we had been absent at Meridian; and there I found Gen. McPherson, who had arrived from Vicksburg, and had assumed command of the Army of the Tennessee. Gen. McPherson accompanied me, and we proceeded by the cars to Stevenson, Bridgeport, etc., to Chattanooga, where we spent a day or two

with Gen. Geo. H. Thomas, and then continued on to Knoxville,

changes in the organization of the three separate armies which were destined to take the field, among which was the consolidation of the Eleventh and Twelfth Corps (Howard and Slocum) into a single corps, to be commanded by Gen. Jos. Hooker. Gen. Howard was to be transferred to the Fourth Corps, vice Gordon Granger, to avail himself of his leave of absence; and Gen. Slocum was to be ordered down the Mississippi River to command the District of Vicksburg. These changes required the consent of the President, and were all in due time approved.

THE GREAT QUESTION OF THE CAMPAIGN was one of supplies. Nashville, our chief depot, was itself partially in a hostile country, and even the routes of supply from Louisville to Nashville by rail, and by way of the Cumberland River, had to be guarded. Chattanooga (our starting point) was 136 miles in front of Nashville, and every foot of the way, especially the many bridges, trestles and culverts, had to be strongly guarded against the acts of a local hostile population and of the enemy's cavalry. Then, of course, as we advanced into Georgia, it was manifest that we should have to repair the railroad, use it, and guard it likewise. Gen. Thomas's army was much the largest of the three, was best provided, and contained the best corps of engineers, railroad managers, and repair parties, as well as the best body of spies and provost-marshals. All we were therefore compelled in a great measure to rely for these most useful branches of service. He had so long exercised absolute command and control over the railroads in his department, that the other armies were jealous, and these thought the Army of the Cumberland got the lion's share of the supplies and other advantages of the railroads. I found a good deal of feeling in the Army of the Tennessee on this score, and therefore took supreme control of the roads myself, placed all the army commanders on an equal footing, and gave to each the same control, as far as orders of transportation for men and stores were concerned. Thomas's spies brought him frequent and accurate reports of Jos. E. Johnston's army at Dalton, giving its strength anywhere between forty and fifty thousand men, and these were being reinforced by troops from Mississippi and by the Georgia militia, under Gen. G. W. Smith. Gen. Johnston seemed to be acting purely on the defensive, so that we had time and leisure to take all our measures deliberately and fully. I fixed the date of May 1 when all things should be in readiness for the grand forward movement, and then returned to Nashville, Gen. Schofield going back to Knoxville, and McPherson to Huntsville, Thomas remaining at Chattanooga.

On the 2d of April, at Nashville, I wrote to Gen. Grant, then at Washington, reporting to him the results of my visit to the several armies, and asked his consent to the several changes proposed, which was promptly given by telegraph. I then addressed myself specially to

THE TROUBLESOME QUESTION OF TRANSPORTATION AND SUPPLIES. I found the capacity of the railroads from Nashville forward to Decatur, and to Chattanooga, so small, especially in the number of locomotives and cars, that it was clear that they were barely able to supply the daily wants of the armies then dependent on them, with no power of accumulating a surplus in advance. The cars were daily loaded down with men returning from furlough, with cattle, horses, etc.; and, by reason of the previous desolation of the country between Chattanooga and Knoxville, Gen. Thomas had authorized the issue of provisions to the suffering inhabitants.

We could not attempt an advance into Georgia without food, ammunition, etc.; and ordinary prudence dictated that we should have an accumulation at the front, in case of interruption to the railway by the act of the enemy, or by common accident. Accordingly, on the 6th of April, I issued a general order, limiting the use of the railroad cars to transporting only the essential articles of food, ammunition and supplies for the army proper, forbidding any further issues to citizens, and cutting off all civil traffic; requiring the commanders of posts within 30 miles



GEN. HOWARD.

of Nashville to haul out their own stores in wagons, requiring all troops destined for the front to march, and all beef cattle to be driven on their own legs. This was a great help, but of course it naturally raised a howl. Some of the poor Union people of East Tennessee appealed to President Lincoln.

(Continued on second page)

IN THE WILDERNESS.

Vermont Brigade and Getty's Division
Fought and Suffered.

REMARKABLE STRUGGLE.

Opposing Forces Primed for
Decisive Action.

HOLDING A CROSSING.

Federal General Movement a
Direct Advance on
Richmond.

BY GEN. L. A. GRANT, MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.



Wilderness, May 5, and ended at Cold Harbor, June 12, was sanguinary and

IN SOME RE-
spects the battle
of the Wilderness
was the most re-
markable of the
civil war. Un-
doubtedly, the
campaign which
commenced on the
Rapidan May 4,
1864, and ended
at Appomattox
April 9, '65, was
the most remark-
able on record.

That portion of it which commenced at the battle of the Wilderness, May 5, and ended at Cold Harbor, June 12, was sanguinary and

their conduct and give due credit to whom it belongs. His report may be general and refer only to the operations of the army of his command. This leaves to the officers of inferior rank and lesser commands the duty, or the privilege, at least, of telling their own story, and calling attention to the action of their own commands.

If, in telling my story, I shall tell more of the action of the Vermont Brigade than of the other two brigades engaged with it, the generous reader may pardon the seeming offense, because I was constantly with the Vermont Brigade, and knew more about it than about the others, and because of a pardonable pride I have in the history and record of that brigade.

During the Winter of 1863-'64 the Army of the Potomac, under Gen. Meade, had been lying in the vicinity of Brandy Station and Culpeper Court-house, and the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia, under Gen. Lee, had been lying in the vicinity of Orange Court-house. Both armies were well recruited, drilled, and disciplined, and were ready for the conflict. It was, I believe, the general impression among officers and men, especially of the Union army, that the coming campaigns would be decisive of the war.

There was to be a simultaneous movement of armies. Gen. Meade was to advance on Lee and Richmond; Gen. Butler was to move up from Fort Monroe and threaten Richmond from the south; Gen. Sherman was to move upon the army in his front; and other movements were ordered, so that all the Confederate armies would be kept busy and from

REINFORCING EACH OTHER, as they otherwise might do, having the advantage of interior lines and defensive operations.

CROSSED THE RAPIDAN

at Ely's Ford, and marched to Chancellorsville and bivouacked on the old battlefield. The Fifth Corps (Gen. G. K. Warren) and the Sixth Corps (Gen. John Sedgwick) crossed at Germanna Ford, and bivouacked along the road leading to the Wilderness Tavern.

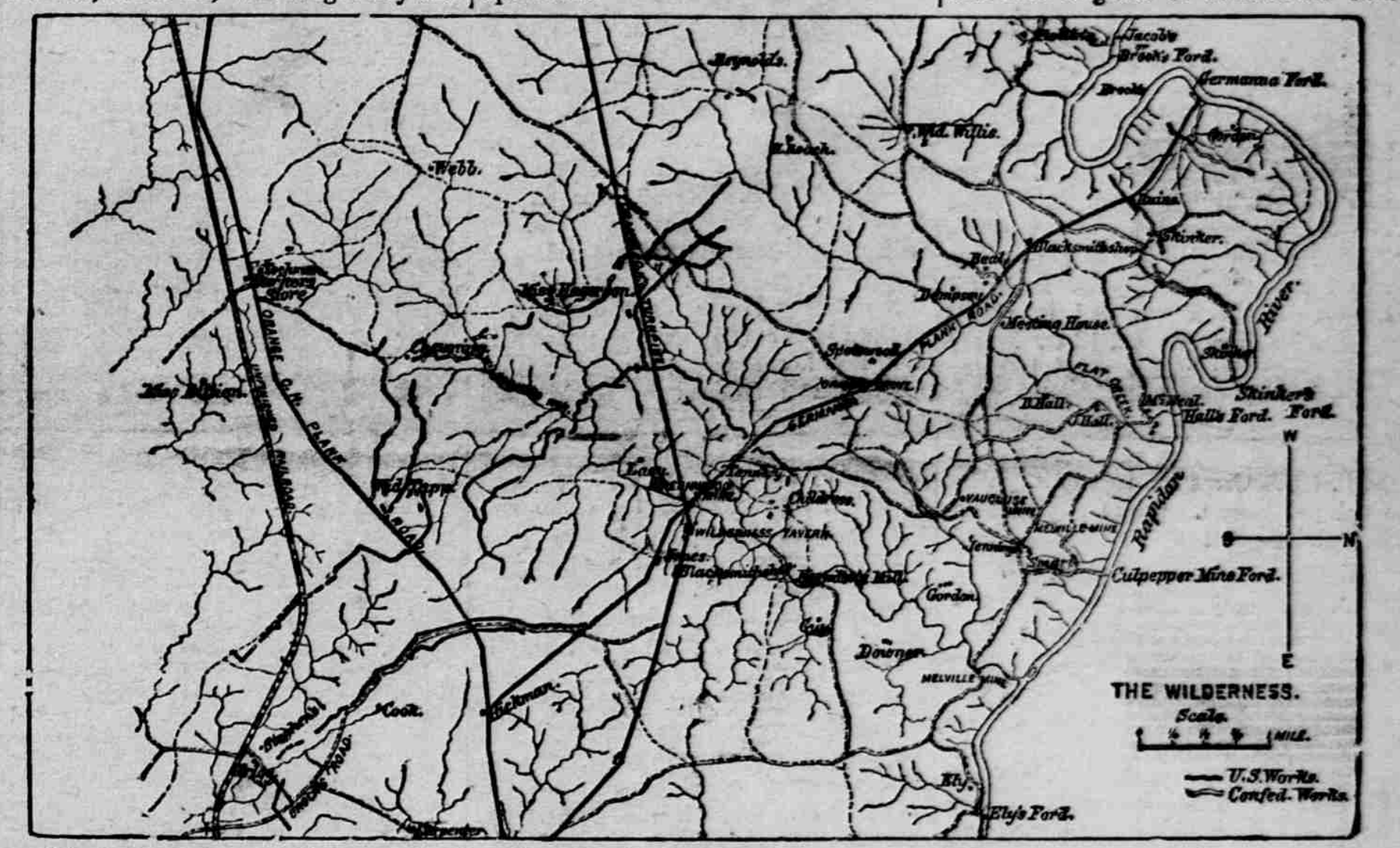
Ely's Ford is five or six miles below Germanna Ford. Chancellorsville is on the pike, or turnpike, leading from Fredericksburg to Orange Court-house, and five or six miles southeast from the



TODD'S TAVERN.

Wilderness Tavern. The Orange Plank road intersects the pike about two miles northwest from Chancellorsville. The Brock road crosses the Plank road nearly two miles south from the Wilderness Tavern and nearly five miles west from Chancellorsville, and about five miles north from Todd's Tavern.

Todd's Tavern is at the intersection of the Brock and Catharin roads, and about five miles south from the Orange Plank road. Parker's Store is on the Plank road in the direction of Orange Court-house, and about three miles from the Brock road. It is important that the location of the crossing of the Plank and Brock roads, and its relations to the places named, should be understood. It is the central point to which attention is called, and near it was fought one of the bloodiest battles of the war between three brigades of Gen. Getty's Division, numbering about six thousand, and nine brigades of Confederate Gen.



terrible in the extreme. It was a fearful and continued struggle between two armies of the same race, mostly trained veterans, and each commanded by one of the great military chieftains of the world.

The battle raged every day, and nearly every hour. When one part of the line was not engaged another part usually was. Local advantages were gained and lost. Sometimes a flank was turned, a line broken, or some command pressed back, to be reformed or held at the expense of a loss elsewhere. There was no general falling back, no retreating, and no abandonment of the struggle. Every movement of either army was made to renew the conflict, turn a flank, gain an advantage, or to forward or resist the advance of the Union army upon the Confederate Capital. It was a life-and-death struggle, where skill, courage, and powers of endurance were tested to the utmost.

If we study the history of the campaign, the orders and correspondence while it was going on, the movements of the armies, the reports and accounts by eye-witnesses on both sides; examine carefully the map of the country, following closely the bloody trail from the Rapidan to the Chickahominy, we shall find that nearly every inch of ground was fought over, that the soil was saturated with the blood of brave men, and that the hills and valleys became soldiers' sepulchres.

It is my purpose in this paper to write mainly of the battle of the Wilderness, and particularly of the part taken by the Vermont Brigade and two other brigades of Gen. Getty's Division (Second Division, Sixth Corps), on the Orange Plank road. I do this believing that full

JUSTICE HAS NOT BEEN DONE to that brigade and that division for what they did and suffered there. I don't write complainingly, or because I think any intentional injustice has been done; but because I think the fearful struggle they had, the great sacrifices they made, the position they held, the punishment they inflicted upon the enemy, and the bearing of their action upon the general result have not been well understood and appreciated.

It is not expected that an officer in command of an army or a corps can always have personal knowledge of the actions of minor commands; nor that in his reports he can always specify

Gen. U. S. Grant had been made Lieutenant-General, and he proposed to take the field and immediate direction of the movements against Lee. Gen. Burnside's Ninth Corps was to be brought up and treated as a separate army until a junction was made with Butler, thus keeping two armies in the field and justifying the presence of the Lieutenant-General, if any such justification was necessary.

The Army of the Potomac consisted of the Cavalry Corps of three divisions and an abundance of artillery; the Second Corps, of four divisions of infantry and one brigade of artillery; the Fifth Corps, of four divisions of infantry and one brigade of artillery, and the Sixth Corps, of three divisions of infantry and one brigade of artillery.



WILDERNESS TAVERN.

The Second Division of the Sixth Corps (Gen. George W. Getty, now retired, and living near Washington, D. C.) consisted of four brigades. The three brigades that fought on the Plank road were: The First, Gen. Frank Wheaton, now a Brigadier-General in the Regular Army; the Second, Gen. L. A. Grant, who lives to tell the tale, and the Fourth, Gen. H. L. Eustice, since dead.

The Second Brigade was the Vermont Brigade, and consisted of five regiments: The 2d Vt., Col. Newton Stone, killed in battle on the Plank road; the 3d Vt., Col. T. O. Seaver, now a leading lawyer in Woodstock, Vt.; the 4th Vt., Col. George P. Foster, seriously wounded in battle on the Plank road, and since dead; the 5th Vt., Lieut.-Col. J. R. Lewis, lost an arm in battle on the Plank road, now retired and living at Atlanta, Ga.; and the 6th Vt., Col. E. L. Barney, killed in battle on the Plank road.

The general movements commenced May 4, 1864. The Second Corps, Gen. W. S. Hancock,

Hill's Corps, numbering about fifteen thousand. And it is one of the important points of the battle of the Wilderness.

The general movement of the Union army was a direct advance on Richmond, and a flank movement on Lee's army. It would compel Lee to march on Washington, fall back on Richmond, or move out and attack the flanking army.

Gen. Meade's orders for May 5 were for Warren to move his Fifth Corps to Parker's Store (on the Plank road) and leave his right extended toward the Wilderness Tavern; for Sedgwick to leave one division of his Sixth Corps at Germanna Ford until Burnside's arrival, and with his other two divisions follow Warren's Corps to the Wilderness Tavern, and for Hancock to move his Second Corps to Shady Grove (about three miles beyond Todd's Tavern), and extend his right toward the Fifth Corps at Parker's Store. This would form a line eight or nine miles long.

FACING LEE'S ARMY, with Sedgwick on the right, Warren in the center, and Hancock on the left.

Lee interfered with the execution of this order. On reaching the Wilderness Tavern, Warren found a Confederate force on the pike, and Meade sent word to Hancock to halt at Todd's Tavern. When Getty's Division, of the Sixth Corps, reached the Wilderness Tavern, Warren was skirmishing with the enemy and preparing to advance up the pike. Considerable time was spent in feeling of the enemy's position and learning his intentions. It was supposed that Lee had sent down a small force to attack and delay, while his main force was moving toward Richmond. Gen. Meade expressed that belief early in the morning, and Lieut.-Gen. Grant wrote him from Germanna Ford at 8:24 May 5: "As soon as I can see Burnside I will go forward. If any opportunity presents itself for pitching into a part of Lee's army, do so without giving time for disposition." At 9 a. m. Gen. Meade wrote the Lieutenant-General: "I think still Lee is simply making a demonstration to gain time."

It takes time to move armies and to find out the position and strength of the enemy, especially in a country like the Wilderness, where the thickly-standing trees and dense underbrush retard movements and obstruct, almost prevent, observations. It was nearly noon be-